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**NEW ASSESSMENT TOOL AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM TO SUPPORT
WORKSITE WELLNESS EFFORTS**

CHICAGO – March 20, 2012 – To help employers better assess their efforts to improve the health and productivity of their workforce, the *Healthy Worksite Initiative* has been launched. The initiative is a project of *Building a Healthier Chicago* and a collaborative effort of the American Medical Association, the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Office of the Regional Health Administrator of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - Region V, the Midwest Business Group on Health, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.

Building a Healthier Chicago's (BHC) *Healthy Worksite Initiative* provides employers with innovative tools that can be used to evaluate their current wellness programs, better target the allocation of time and investments, and effectively identify resources that can help to improve the health of their employees, increase productivity, and better manage health care costs.

“The *Healthy Worksite Initiative* was developed to fill a critical gap in the health care continuum,” said Assistant Surgeon General James Galloway, MD. “Historically, traditional health care models failed to focus specifically on the wellness of the individual within the workplace, where today Americans are spending over 2,000 hours a year. Now, more than ever, it is crucial that healthy places and spaces be available to all American employees, for their own health, and for the health of our nation.”

BHC is offering employers access to a free Worksite Wellness assessment on their website at www.HealthierChicago.org. The assessment can be used as a gap analysis or auditing tool. Employers who complete the tool will receive a summary report as well as access to a comprehensive online guide containing high-quality, no-cost health and wellness resources. Employers interested in being recognized for the successful efforts in worksite wellness may submit the assessment for BHC recognition and will be eligible for one of four specialty categories Gold Plus, Gold, Silver or Bronze award indicating their level of achievement.

At a White House roundtable discussion on health care costs, President Obama extolled the benefits of worksite wellness programs saying that, “Where companies are able to take initiatives to make their employees healthier, to give them incentives and mechanisms to improve their wellness to prevent disease, companies see their bottom lines improve.”

“The BHC assessment is a great way for us to determine what our program gaps are and to identify best practices – it’s like having the support of a consultant to help us drive our health improvement initiatives,” said Abby Moler, Wellbeing Specialist at Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council.

About Building a Healthier Chicago

Building a Healthier Chicago (BHC) is a collaborative of local and national stakeholders, working together to strengthen efforts to promote the health of Chicago residents and employees. BHC is working in concert with First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! campaign to address childhood obesity. Through collaboration, BHC promotes and tracks the adoption of selected programs, practices, and policies, and supportive environments throughout the worksites, schools, health care organizations, faith-based organizations, parks, and neighborhoods of Chicago. BHC works with community organizations, academics, health care, and government to improve the health of all citizens. Learn more here: www.HealthierChicago.org

About the Office of the Regional Health Administrator of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Region V

As the senior federal public health official and scientist in the region, the Regional Health Administrator (RHA) performs essential functions for the DHHS in three major areas: prevention, preparedness, and agency-wide coordination. These functions directly and indirectly support the work of the Department and individual federal agencies.

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